

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

sub 1  
A1  
1. An electronic contact resolution method, comprising:  
automatically extracting contact information from a data store;  
maintaining a list of at least one contact entry derived from the  
5 contact information extracted from the data store;  
tracking contact information associated with the contact entry; and  
automatically resolving contact entries in real time by dynamically  
providing specific contact entries from the maintained list.

sub 2  
B2  
2. The method of claim 1 wherein the data store includes sent and  
received email.

sub 3  
A3  
3. The method of claim 1 wherein the data store includes a plurality of  
electronic documents.

4. The method of claim 1 wherein entries of the maintained list are  
weighted.

sub 5  
A5  
5. The method of claim 4 wherein the weight of an entry is updated  
dynamically based on the number of times that the entry has been used.

6. The method of claim 4 wherein the weight of an entry is updated  
dynamically based on the time since an email using the contact data of the entry  
was sent.

7. The method of claim 4 wherein the weight of an entry is updated  
dynamically based on the time since an email using the contact data of the entry  
was received.

8. The method of claim 4 wherein the weight of an entry is updated dynamically based on the time since an item containing data matching the entry was added to the data store.

5 9. The method of claim 4 wherein the weight of an entry is updated dynamically as new information enters the data store.

10 Sub B3 10. The method of claim 1 wherein automatically resolving contact entries comprises providing a most probable match to an input.

11. The method of Claim 1 wherein automatically resolving contact entries comprises providing a most recently used match to an input.

15 Sub B3 12. The method of claim 4 wherein automatically resolving contact entries comprises providing the entry having the greatest weight where one or more entries match an input.

20 Sub B3 13. The method of claim 1 wherein the size of the list is constrained to improve performance of automatically resolving contact entries.

14. The method of claim 1 wherein the size of the list is specified by a user.

25 15. The method of claim 1 wherein the list is disabled by a user.

16. The method of claim 1 wherein new entries are added to the list as new information enters the data store.

30 17. The method of claim 16 wherein entries are removed from the list and replaced with new entries when the list is full.

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18. The method of claim 16 wherein entries are assigned relative weights, and wherein new entries are added to the list to replace entries having weights that are at least equal to the weights.

5 19. The method of claim 18 wherein the new entry is not added to the list if all entries in the list have higher weights than the new entry.

10 20. The method of claim 18 wherein an entry in the list having the lowest weight will be chosen at random and replaced with the new entry if the lowest weight of entries in the list is equal to the weight of the new entry and that weight is shared by at least two entries in the list.

15 21. The method of claim 16 wherein new entries are added to the list after those entries are first used.

22. The method of claim 1 wherein an existing contact database is used with the maintained list for automatically resolving contact entries.

20 23. The method of claim 1 wherein the maintained list is stored in random access memory and cached in a nonvolatile storage medium.

24. The method of claim 1 wherein entries are removed from the list when matching entries are added to a contact database.

25 25. The method of claim 15 wherein entries are not added to the list if they are already stored in a contact database.

30 26. The method of claim 1 wherein the automatically resolved contact entry is selectable by a user via a user interface.

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27. The method of claim 1 wherein items entering the data store are automatically scanned for contact information as the items enter the data store.

28. The method of claim 1 wherein entries in the list are automatically updated as new information matching the entries enter the data store.

29. The method of claim 1 wherein particular items within the data store are excluded from tracking.

30. The method of claim 1 wherein email received from at least one of specific email addresses and Internet domains are excluded from tracking.

31. The method of claim 1 wherein the contact information of the entries includes a plurality of information elements including:

an email address;

a friendly name;

a number of times that the entry has been used;

a date the email address was last sent to;

a date the email address was last received from; and

a weight.

Sub  
127 32. A system for automatically generating a dynamic list of entries containing contact information comprising:

a data store comprising electronic files;

a scan module that scans the data store;

an extract module that extracts contact information from the scanned data; and

a populate module that populates the list with the information extracted from the scanned files.

5 33. The system of claim 32 wherein the data store has a plurality of types of electronic files, including:

at least one of previously sent and received email;  
email addresses and contacts that exist within previous systems;  
email stores located on public servers;  
current and previous contact databases; and  
data embedded within application electronic files.

10 34. The system of claim 32 wherein the contact information of the entries includes an email address.

15 35. The system of claim 32 wherein the contact information of the entries further includes a friendly name.

20 36. The system of claim 33 wherein the contact information of the entries further includes:

a number of times that the entry has been used;  
a date the email address was last sent to; and  
a date the email address was last received from.

25 37. The system of claim 32 wherein entries are dynamically weighted.

30 38. The system of claim 32 wherein contact information matching data within an address book is not added to the list.

35 39. The system of claim 32 wherein the size of the list is constrained.

40. The system of claim 32 wherein the size of the list is variable.

41. The system of claim 32 wherein new entries are added to the list as new information enters the data store.

sub 30 42. The system of claim 32 wherein the list via is capable of being browsed via a user interface.

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Sub B 43. The system of claim 32 wherein entries from the resolution list are selectively added to an address book via a user interface.

10 44. The system of claim 32 further comprising automatically suggesting to a user that specific entries from the list be added to an address book via a user interface.

15 45. The system of claim 32 further comprising automatically providing completion information via a user interface from an entry in the list based on a partial match to user input.

20 46. The system of claim 32 wherein particular electronic files within the data store are excluded from scanning.

25 47. The system of claim 32 wherein email received from at least one of specific email addresses and Internet domains are excluded from scanning.

sub 30 48. A method for automatically generating a dynamic list of entries containing contact information comprising:  
scanning the data store containing electronic files;  
extracting contact information from the scanned files; and  
populating the list with the information extracted from the scanned files.

Sub B15 49. The method of claim 48 wherein the data store has a plurality of types of electronic files, including:  
at least one of previously sent and received email;

email addresses and contacts that exist within previous systems;  
email stores located on public servers;  
at least one of current and previous contact databases and address  
books; and  
5 data embedded within other application electronic files.

50. The method of claim 48 wherein the contact information of the  
entries includes an email address.

10 51. The system of claim 48 further comprising automatically providing  
completion information via a user interface from an entry in the list based on a  
partial match to user input.

15 52. The system of claim 48 wherein particular electronic files within the  
data store are excluded from scanning.

20 53. The system of claim 48 wherein email received from at least one of  
specific email addresses and Internet domains are excluded from scanning.

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